1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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601 from younger brother in the terminology, there is one extra relative, making a total of seventy-one for each member of the society.

Every individual in Murngin society, looked at from the point of view of the totality of his behavior in the society, expresses all of the kinship relations. At one moment he is behaving as a son to his father, and in the next as a father to his son, or as a son-in-law to his father-in-law, and then reversing this latter relationship with some other person. Because of the classificatory or tribal type of kinship reckoning, each Murngin has every type of relationship expressed by the system.

602 One of the most general statements that can be made about Murngin kinship structure is that the perpendicular or vertical lines in the structure are very strong; they consist primarily of fathers and children. The lateral or horizontal lines are comparatively weak, since they consist primarily of the extension of the kinship structure through marriage. This comparative weakness and strength are an important determinant in the behavior of the Murngin. Various devices are used and customs formed around the feeling of weakness expressed in all the individual's behavior within the laterally extended kinship structure. The most dramatic examples are found in the mirrirri and wakinu customs which surround the relation of tabooed brother to sister, and of the maternal grandmother's brother to sister's daughter's son.

617 Although from the simple relations found within the immediate family the Murngin have worked out this very elaborate, extended kinship structure in great detail, they also, in common with many other Australian tribes, have reversed the process and reclassified the relatives into more general kin groupings, termed subsections by the later anthropologists and mistakenly called marriage classes by the earlier. The subsection terminology groups all seventy-one relatives into but eight exogamic units. This simplification aids greatly in determining a man's relationship to people from more distant areas and functions openly during the gatherings of the people for their great rituals when such identifications become necessary.

614 Geographical space is injected formally into the Murngin social system by the territorial extension given the clan. The various areas with their natural phenomena such as pools, rivers, lakes, trees, larger stones, hills, and plains have totemic references associated with the clan. The clans, as has been stated, are regrouped into two exogamic divisions or moieties which by virtue of their classification of the clans

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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hand corner of the kinship chart marries into the line at its right, this new line is again called the mari, mokul, marelker line to terminate the system.

The new line of kin, however, is necessary if the asymmetrical type of marriage is to remain stable, since, as has already been explained, the mari-kutara reciprocal creates an equilibrium in the kinship structure by balancing the inequalities of the gawel-waku reciprocal. Momelker and natjiwalker are important because the former is the mother of ego's mother-in-law and the latter is the brother of this woman. Dumungur, reciprocal of these terms, is emotionally important because, from the point of view of momelker and natchiwalker, he is the person who has a feeling of taboo for them since the woman is his mother-in-law's mother.

Marelker is mari's son. He follows his father's behavior toward ego. He later will be ego's son's mari. He treats ego's children with all the affection of a mother and father. He is gawel to ego's galle (wife's brother) to whom ego stands in the potentially weak relationship of dué. The whole mari-marelker line and gurrong-kutara line add a check to the gawel-galle line and balance the kinship system.

The momelker relationship is built out of the mokul rumeru behavior. Ego acts to her as his gawel does (she is gawel's mokul). She is the mother of mokul rumeru, the natives say; and just as one avoids a mother of one's wife, so one avoids her mother. The natchiwalker line also acts as a check on the mari line and further balances the kinship system as it stands in the relation of gawel and galle to mari-marelker line of descent.

Murngin Subsections

The Murngin, like the Kariera and Arunta relatives, are regrouped into larger reciprocal divisions. Professor Radcliffe-Brown has called these divisions "sections" when they number four, as among the Kariera; and "subsections" when they number eight, as among the Arunta. His brilliant paper also for the first time recognized the true importance of these divisions and gave them the formulary expression used in this book.[18]

The Murngin system shares many elements with the two major types of section and subsection found in Australia, but in certain respects it does not conform to either.

[18] Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., "The Social Organization of Australian Tribes," *Oceania*, Vol. I, 1930.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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The Murngin subsections are based on a system of marriage and descent and they are essentially a kinship structure. They generalize on the larger kinship structure with its great number of relatives by placing a group of these relatives together and calling them by one term. By this regrouping process, all the kinship terms are reduced to eight, since the subsection system has eight divisions. The people who are to be placed in any one group are determined first by an alternation of generations in the kinship system. For example, a man's paternal grandfather is in the same subsection as himself, and his son's children are also in his subsection. This rule of alternation of generation, which is followed in all seven lines of descent, would create only two new groupings out of the kinship system. A second rule creating two additional groupings places all relatives in ego's own moiety in the same set of subsections as his own line and those relatives who are in the opposite moiety in opposing sections. (This does not necessarily mean that the moiety operates here to accomplish this, but that the same principles which underlie dual organization also operate in helping create the subsections.) The total of eight subsections is achieved by dividing each kinship personality (see, for example, marikmo, nati and mari, Chart II) into two. The existing marriage laws govern the behavior of each of the various subsections, and the kinship laws of descent regulate the descent of the offspring inasmuch as each of the patrilineal lines found in any one subsection determines the children's general place in this grouping. The only addition to the general rules of kinship behavior made by the subsection structure is the division of the patrilineal lines into new groupings on the basis of alternation of generation. The placement of collateral lines, such as mari with marikmo, in one group is already fundamental to this classificatory system of kinship by which collateral relatives are classed as lineal kin. The moiety and the clan, to a lesser extent, also class separate lines of descent and larger groupings by the same general principle. Even the principle of alternation of generation is already expressed in a number of the lines of descent where, as for example in a man's mother's mother's lineage, the alternate generations have the same kinship terms.

The eight subsections in the Murngin system, four in each moiety, are:[19]

[19] Each of the subsection names has been lettered to simplify presentation of the material.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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Dua	Yiritja
A^1 m. Buralung	B^1 m. Narit
f. Kalint	f. Naritjin
A^2 m. Ballung (Belin)	B^2 m. Burlain
f. Billindjint	f. Burlaindjint
D^1 m. Wamut	C^1 m. Kaidjawk
f. Wamutjin	f. Kaitjin
D^2 m. Kamerdung	C^2 m. Bangardi
f. Kamindjint	f. Bangarditjin

Each subsection has a male and female term, the latter usually formed by suffixing "-djint" or "-tjint" to the root.

Murngin marriage rules differ from those of the other two major forms of section systems found in Australia. An A^1 male can marry women out of B^1 or B^2 subsections, and an A^2 male can marry the same women. The B^1 and B^2 subsections reciprocate with the A^1 and A^2 groups. The same is true of C^1 and C^2 and D^1 and D^2. In the Arunta system the four subsections of one moiety marry into the four subsections of the opposite moiety, but with the rule that only one subsection out of the first half can marry a single subsection out of the opposite four; with the Murngin, a man of one subsection can marry into either one or both of two subsections in the opposite moiety, but he cannot marry into the other two of the other moiety or into any of his own moiety. This reduces the subsections from the point of view of marriage to the four sections of the Kariera type:

$$A^{1,2} = B^{1,2}$$
$$C^{1,2} = D^{1,2}$$

The descent rules, however, follow the usual Arunta method. An A^1 or A^2 man marries a B^1 woman; her children are D^2. If an A^1 or A^2 man marries a B^2 woman, the children are D^1; if a B^1 or B^2 man marries an A^{2}[1] woman, the children are C^1; or if a B^1 or B^2 man marries an A^2 woman, the children are C^2.

When a C^1 or C^2 man marries a D^1 woman, the offspring of this union are B^1. If either of these men marries D^2, the children are B^2; if a D^1 or D^2 man has a C^1 wife, the children are A^2; or if they marry C^2, the children are A^1.

This can be expressed in the following chart (VII):[20]

A comparison of this with the Arunta and Kariera formulae shows the concrete differences in the three mechanisms and, further, how

[20] The = signs indicate marriage, and the arrows descent.

[1] [An apparent error, should be A^2, see charts VII & VIII. - Analyst]

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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the Murngin subsection system combines elements of the other two forms.[21]

Although the Murngin have eight named subsections, the Arunta and Kariera charts compared with the Murngin ones show that these eight divisions are grouped into pairs, so that actually the A^1 and A^2 subsections, for example, are but an A section, and B^1 and B^2 a B section. In other words, there are two intermarrying groups in both Murngin and Kariera, although in Kariera each one of these groups has only one name for the male members, whereas in Murngin there are two names for each marrying section because it has been divided into subsections.

Further examination shows only two lines of descent in each moiety of the Kariera form, whereas in the Murngin there are four lines of descent in each moiety. If we turn to the Arunta formula, we see

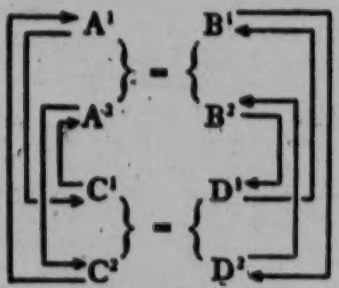

CHART VII.—THE MURNGIN SUBSECTION SYSTEM

eight lines of descent also, but four marriages instead of two as in the two other systems. To put this concretely, in Kariera the male lines of descent are A to D, D to A in moiety 1, and C to B, and B to C in moiety 2; for Arunta, A^1 to D^2, and from D^2 to A^1; from A^2 to D^1 and from D^1 to A^2 in moiety 1; and in moiety 2, from B^1 to C^1, C^1 to B^1, B^2 to C^2, and C^2 to B^2. In Murngin the son of an A^1 man may be either D^1 or D^2, depending upon which subsection the man married into; an A^2 man's children will also be D^1 or D^2. This is true of the male descent of all the subsections. In the Kariera, Arunta, and Murngin systems, in the event of a wrong marriage, "the father is thrown away." In the Kariera and Arunta this rule operates only for wrong marriages, since a member of a section or subsection in these systems can marry properly into only one other section or subsection. In Murn-

[21] See Warner, W. Lloyd, "Kinship Morphology of Forty-one North Australian Tribes," *American Anthropologist*, 1933, Vol. XXXV, No. 1, pages 63-86.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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gin society this is also a device used for wrong marriages in the kinship system, but in the subsection system it has been formalized so that A^1 or A^2, for example, is made into a regular spouse of B^1 or B^2, and neither of the males of B^1 or B^2 has any control over the descent of their children from the wives of A^1 and A^2. The child's subsection is always determined by the mother's position in the eight subsections, never by the father's.

To restate the situation, the kinship system of the Murngin is patrilineal and matrilineal; but the subsection system in descent, which is only an extension of the kinship system, is purely matrilineal. For as far as the descent of the child is concerned, it makes no difference if

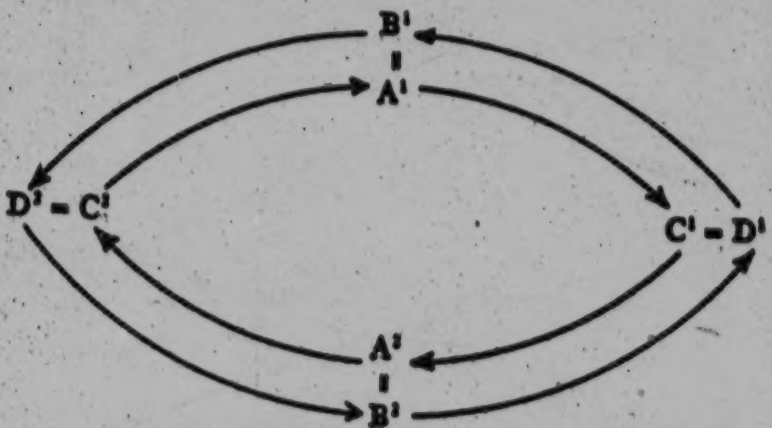

CHART VIII.—MATRILINEAL CYCLES OF THE SUBSECTION SYSTEM

the father belongs to the two regular subsections into which the mother's subsection ordinarily marries, or to an irregular one. The mother's subsection is final in determining the child's subsection.

Within the Murngin subsection system there are two unnamed matrilineal cycles or, to express it in another way, four lines of female descent (Chart VIII). The first is B^1—D^2—B^2—D^1—and B^1; the second, A^1—C^1—A^2—C^2—and A^1. These two unnamed cycles of descent through the female line show that, in addition to the named patrilineal moieties, the Murngin also have unnamed matrilineal moieties because of the descent through the mothers of a subsection. The child's subsection, however, is always in his father's moiety, even though his position in the subsection of his father's moiety is wholly dependent upon that of his mother's in her moiety.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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These two cycles may be expressed by the following formula:

The descent cycles of the Murngin and the Arunta through the female lines are exactly the same, except that in Arunta the optional marriage is not permitted.

The articulation of the subsection to the kinship system is given in Chart II. It will be seen that each patrilineal line of the kinship system has four subsections in it, consisting of two alternating pairs. For example, the first line at the left of ego (Chart II) shows B^1 and B^2 alternating by generation with C^1 and C^2; in ego's own line A^1 and A^2 alternate by generation with D^1 and D^2.

This means that each group of relatives will be divided between A^1 and A^2 in a generation and line. In other words, all father's fathers and father's father's sisters are divided between A^1 and A^2 (there will of course be father's fathers in both subsections as well as father's father's sisters); all fathers and father's sisters between D^1 and D^2; all brothers and sisters between A^1 and A^2; all sons and daughters between D^1 and D^2; all son's sons and son's daughters between A^1 and A^2. Thus we have described ego's own patrilineal line by generation and shown that a pair of subsections alternates with another pair of subsections and separates the group of relatives of each generation into two divisions. The same is true, except for different subsections, for all the other lines of descent.

Here one of the fundamental laws of Australian kinship is broken, for sibling equivalence is well recognized in all subsection systems of the other tribes. This makes a slight maladjustment in the kinship system. The natives themselves feel this. They always say that a pair of subsections are "all the same as brothers, but different."

A glance at the articulation of the subsection system and the kinship system from the point of view of the subsection also throws further light on the subsection system. The relatives have been placed in the above grouping of four instead of eight because each relative will be found in two subsections, as has been said before; that is, some of ego's brothers and sisters will be in A^1 and others will be in A^2, just as some of ego's mother's brother's daughters will be in B^1 and others in B^2. The grouping of the relatives into four sections is exactly the same as the system used by the Kariera, and the contents of the above four pairs of subsections are the same as those of the four Kariera sections, except that Murngin has additional terms in each of the four groups.

The principle of alternation of generation is clearly demonstrated in the Murngin configuration. In the subsection arrangement, in the

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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second ascending generation in ego's line, the marikmos are grouped as A, and the first ascending is D (the father's); and in ego's generation the brothers and sisters are grouped as A again. Ego's son is D and his son's son is A. To the right of ego the line from top to bottom runs B, C, B, C, and B, and to the left of ego the same alternation of generation is found. Ego's grandfather and ego's own generations are grouped together, and ego's son's son is also grouped with him. Ego's father and his son are placed together in a different subsection. In other words, alternating generations within patrilineal lines are grouped together, so that grandfathers and grandsons are considered to be members of one group.

The Murngin use their subsection system much as they do their kinship system; a man or a woman is called by his subsection term almost as often as by his kin designation. Even the children use a subsection title, usually employing it more frequently than the kinship term.

At large intertribal gatherings when the kinship term is difficult to obtain because of the remoteness of the various relatives, the subsection terminology is used; this with slight variations is the same throughout northeast Arnhem Land. Some of the people come from hundreds of miles for these great ceremonies in the lower Goyder and Glyde River districts, and their *kinship* terminology is utterly different. Since the section terms are practically the same and only eight in number, it is comparatively easy to discover one's subsection relationship to an utter stranger. The subsections also play a prominent rôle in three of the main ceremonies. In the Djungguan ceremony they regulate the order of certain dances and also the time for calling out the sacred names of the men's dead ancestors. The subsection as well as the clan and moiety system of the Murngin has a totemic significance, since each subsection has a group of totems attached to it, viz., A^1 Buralung: stone kangaroo, night heron, sultry albatross, and wallaby; A^2 Ballung: iguana; D^1 Wamut: wedge-tailed eagle; D^2 Kamerdung: sea eagle and the sun; B^1 Narit: gray kangaroo and a small fresh water fish; B^2 Burlain: emu and thin-legged kangaroo; C^1 Kaidjawk: ibis; C^2 Bangardi: brown-tailed hawk.

These totems and the subsections, as well as the position of the subsection in ceremonies, will be more fully discussed in the chapters dealing with totemism, local organization and ceremony.

The above description proves clearly that, contrary to the opinion of the older writers, the subsection and section system does not regu-

1; Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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late marriage but serves rather as an extension of the kinship system. The earlier writers' own evidence shows that it does not regulate marriage, because the relationship of a woman and man finally determines what persons they marry. In Murngin as well as Kariera, ego always marries his mother's brother's daughter, and it is of no concern which subsection she is in—in Murngin he can marry a woman of B^1 or B^2 if he is an A^1 or A^2. It is her kinship relationship to him that really counts; further, in the group from which he takes his wife there are several women that he cannot marry—for example, father's mother.

Reciprocals

"Man speaking" and "woman speaking." These terms do not apply to the reciprocals of the Murngin people as they do among certain other Australian peoples. They follow a very simple rule: ego and his sister call all relatives by the same term. If ego calls a man or woman "kutara," she addresses them by the same term. This means that ego's son and daughter, whom he calls gatu, are also called gatu by his sister, while her children are called waku by him and by her. Ego's sister's husband calls her children gatu, and ego's sister's husband's sister would also call them gatu. Ego's mother calls him waku.

The above method, like most exotic systems of nomenclature, seems strange and "unnatural" to a European, yet they have only extended a method we partially use. To all ascending relatives, a sister and brother in our society apply the same terms (mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandfather, and grandmother). They also apply the same terms to certain lateral relatives, such as first and second cousin. The Murngin do the same except that they also include the descending relatives.

There is thus extended to sisters an equivalence with brothers almost as complete as is usual in primitive society.

The Murngin reciprocals are:

Wa-wa ⟷ Yu-ki-yu-ko
Wa-wa ⟷ Yep-pa
Yu-ki-yu-ko ⟷ Yep-pa
Yep-pa ⟷ Yep-pa
Du-mun-gur ⟷ Na-tji-wal-ker
Du-mun-gur ⟷ Mo-mel-ker
Wa-ku ⟷ Ga-wel

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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Wa-ku ⟷ Arn-di
Ku-tar-a ⟷ Mar-i
Gur-rong ⟷ Ma-rel-ker
Gur-rong ⟷ Mo-kul (ru-mer-u)
Dué ⟷ Gal-le
Ka-min-yer ⟷ Nat-i
Ka-min-yer ⟷ Mo-mo
Ma-rik-mo ⟷ Ma-rai-tcha
Ba-pa ⟷ Ga-tu
Mokul Bapa ⟷ Ga-tu

Kinship Terminology, Subsections, and Moieties

(Relations of a Man of A^1 or A^2)

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Moiety 1	*Moiety 2*
$A^{1,2}$	$B^{1,2}$
Marikmo	Nati
Maraitcha	Kaminyer
Wawa (ego)	Momo
Yukiyuko	Galle
Yeppa	Dué
Mari	Natjiwalker

Moiety 1	*Moiety 2*
$D^{1,2}$	$C^{1,2}$
Kutara	Dumungur
Bapa	Momelker
Gatu	Gawel
Marelker	Waku
Mokul rumeru	Arndi
Gurrong	Waku

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
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The Aborigines of East Arnhem Land

A BOOMERANG

A nation's soul at stake!
Now seared and hurt with ill;
Bereft of stick and stake,
By callous alien's will.

A nation's soul at stake!
And that the white man's soul!
He must atonement make
Ere he redeem it whole.

—J.E.P.

Present Condition and Possible Future

144 The natives of East Arnhem Land belong to the Aboriginal race which, prior to white settlement, occupied the whole of this Australian continent. Though these north coastal districts were, during a long past, frequently visited by maritime traders from the Malay Archipelago, there is no evidence of any racial admixture sufficient to produce a variation of physical or mental characteristics, but some few cultural traces of these visitations are to be observed.

582 The social organisation of these people conforms in general
616 principle to that which is familiar to all students of this Australian
617 race. There are, first of all, two individually exogamous, but intermarrying moieties, in this case known as Yirritcha and Dua respectively. Each of these moieties is divided into four sub-sections, making eight sub-sections in all. Marriage can only be between a man and a woman of opposite moieties, and is further regulated by the fact that a man of a particular sub-section of one moiety may marry only a woman of a particular sub-section of the opposite moiety. (See page 8.)

[611] The moieties are determined by patrilineal descent, but the sub-sections by matrilineal descent. That is, the children of a Yirritcha man will also belong to the Yirritcha moiety, but their sub-section is determined by that of the mother, irrespective of that of the father. Therefore, a Yirritcha man of the Bungardi sub-section normally marries a Dua woman of the Kumandjan sub-section. Their children belong to the father's moiety, and so are Yirritcha, but belong to the Bulain sub-section. A

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
OI17 Murngin OI17

Kumandjan woman's children will always belong to the Bulain sub-section, and this order obtains right through the intermarriage of the eight sub-sections of the tribe. 582 611 616 617

All the members of each sub-section, both male and female, possess a definite relationship to some particular bird or animal, which constitutes their class totem or "jungoin." This form of totemism is but poorly developed, and any mature person, after passing through a brief ceremony, may freely kill and eat his or her totem animal. (See page 16.) 616 617

In this area the distinctive feature of the tribal organisation is the emphasis placed on the local hordes or clans, which are of great number, and in some cases contain but few individuals. Each horde consists of men of one moiety only, with their wives of the opposite moiety, and each horde possesses a definitely defined territory, which in every case includes a ceremonial totemic centre. This ceremonial totemism is, in contrast to the class totemism, very highly developed, and is of the utmost significance and importance. 614 621 778

These ceremonial totems, which are very numerous, in the vast majority of cases consist of— 532 778

(a) Representations of utensils and implements believed to have been originated, used and conferred upon the people by certain mythological ancestors.

(b) Representations of natural species associated in legend with these ancestors.

(c) Representations of these mythological ancestors themselves.

All of these are highly conventionalised in design.

These "Muraian," as they are called, lie at the basis of most of the ceremonial life of the people. They are most jealously guarded, and are believed to exercise a profound influence on the fortunes of the clan. The revelation of and the explanation of these "Muraian" constitute one of the most important stages in the education of the young men. 614 778

During the "Nara" ceremonies, which are associated with these "Muraian," the initiates have impressed upon them the ancient tribal regulations and sanctions. They are warned against being insolent to their elders, against dishonesty, against lying, against improper relations with women, and so are enforced many excellent ethical lessons. During their period of instruction they are placed under a food tabu, and are informed that any breach of the regulations taught will result in illness or deformity. 796 867 [784]

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
OI17 Murngin OI17

The regular system of marriage between the sub-sections, with the sub-sections of the offspring, is as follows:— 582 617 611

Yiritcha man	Dua woman	Yiritcha children	
		Male	Female
Ngarit	Bilindjan	Bangardi	Bangaritjan
	Kalian	Kaijark	Koitjan
Bulain	Kalian	Kaijark	Koitjan
	Bilindjan	Bangardi	Bangaritjan
Kaijark	Warmutjan	Ngarit	Ngaritjan
	Kumandjan	Bulain	Bulaindjan
Bangardi	Kumandjan	Bulain	Bulaindjan
	Warmutjan	Ngarit	Ngaritdjan

Dua man	Yiritcha woman	Dua children	
		Male	Female
Buralang	Bulaindjan	Warmut	Warmutjan
	Ngaritjan	Karmarung	Kumandjan
Balang	Ngaritjan	Karmarung	Kumandjan
	Bulaindjan	Warmut	Warmutjan
Karmarung	Bangaritjan	Buralang	Kalian
	Koitjan	Balang	Bilindjan
Warmut	Koitjan	Balang	Bilindjan
	Bangaritjan	Buralang	Kalian

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
OI17 Murngin OI17

●617 The eight sub-sections, with their totems, are as follows:—

Sub-sections		Totems
Male	Female	
(Yiritcha)		
Ngarit	Ngaritjan	Slender-limbed kangaroo
Bulain	Bulaindjan	Stout-limbed kangaroo
Kaijark	Koitjan	Fork-tailed kite
		Large black lizard
		Wagtail
Bangardi	Bangaritjan	Emu
(Dua)		
Buralang	Kalian	Agile wallaby
		Smaller wallaby
Balang	Bilindjan	White-breasted sea-eagle
Kamarung	Kumandjan	Wedge-tailed eagle
Warmut	Warmutjan	Black-breasted buzzard
		Black-nosed kangaroo

C611 The moieties are determined by patrilineal descent, but the 614 sub-sections by matrilineal descent.

8: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1954
OI17 Murngin OI17

with other adjacent groups. On the border line between western and eastern Arnhem Land there are tribes affiliated with the eastern people, but retaining their own distinct cultural pattern. Apart from the linguistic variations between the eastern and western groups, and the tribal organisation of the one and the clan-linguistic group set-up of the other, the principal difference lies in the eastern form of mainly patrilineal descent and the western pattern of descent through the mother.

The moiety is the most important feature in the social organisation of the Wulamba people of the east and south-east. It serves to classify under these two main headings all clans and linguistic groups, the known universe, and the whole life of the people, and affiliates all those belonging to the same moiety. The moieties are exogamous, and are thus the basis upon which marriage rules depend.

In western Arnhem Land we find the moiety-phratry arrangement (related to the totem) now influenced from the south by the subsection system, which is widely spread throughout Aboriginal Australia. Another feature here is the *namanamaidj*, which establishes a child's affinity with his father's group. This, together with tribal and linguistic membership, is patrilineal; but the descent of the moiety, phratry (and totem), and subsection, is matrilineal.

In eastern Arnhem Land the subsections have not yet been fully co-ordinated with the kinship structure, and many of the older people do not use them. Normally, however, the subsections are based on a system of marriage and descent, and are essentially a matter of kinship organisation. They group various relatives together under one term, in such a way that for general purposes all kinship terms are reduced to eight; and since there are eight divisions in this subsection system, four belong to one moiety, and four to the other.[1]

The eastern Arnhem Landers possess certain fundamental features in common with most other Australian Aboriginal communities. Away from European settlements, for instance, they are hunters and collectors who must forage for their food. On the northern and eastern coast of Arnhem Land food is certainly abundant and varied, but its constant supply depends on the

[P.406]

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION IN EASTERN ARNHEM LAND

By T. THEODOR WEBB[1]

131 THE aboriginal peoples referred to in this paper are those occupying the country to the north-east of a line running roughly from Cape Stewart on the north coast of Arnhem Land to Blue Mud Bay in the Gulf of Carpentaria, and extending to the sea coast and the adjacent islands. The social organization of these peoples is marked 621 by a very pronounced emphasis on the importance of the horde, each of which exists as an almost entirely independent unit. These hordes are very numerous; some of them are very small, and there is definite evidence that several of them have actually become extinct, at least in so far as their patrilineal descent as a separate unit is concerned. With the few exceptions mentioned below, each of [197] these hordes, no matter how small, has its own particular dialect. In many cases the dialectal difference is small, and in at least one instance would appear to be consciously artificial.

621 The two moieties into which the aboriginal society is divided are known as Yiritcha and Dua respectively, and these names are 616 used without variation throughout the area indicated. Each horde is exclusively Yiritcha or Dua, as the case may be, and every man [582] obtains his wife from some other horde of the opposite moiety.

624 The two moieties are divided into eight subsections, four Yiritcha and four Dua, and the prevailing form of totemism includes 616 the definite relationship of all members, both male and female, of each subsection (*marlk*), with some particular bird or animal, which 617 is known by the individual as his or her *dzugoin*. These *dzugoin* have, as far as I am able to discover, no association with totem centres. Every member of the same subsection possesses the same *dzugoin*, irrespective of the horde to which he belongs.

[1]Chairman of the North Australia District of the Methodist Missionary Society of Australia.

12: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1933 / OI17 Murngin OI17

The eight subsections, with their totems, are as follows:

Subsections.		Totems.
Male (Yiritcha)	Female	
Ngarit	Ngaritjan	*kurrʃumbul gorowarau*[a] (slender-limbed kangaroo).
Bulain	Bulaindjan	*kurrʃumbul borumgor* (stout-limbed kangaroo).
Kaijark	Koitjan	*harrkain* (fork-tailed kite).
		kurritʃorrk (large black lizard).
		jiriwi-jiriwi (wagtail).
Bangardi	Bangaritjan	*urrpan* (emu).
(Dua)		
Buralang	Kalian	*werrti* (agile wallaby).
		djandil (smaller wallaby).
Balang	Bilindjan	*damala* (white-breasted sea-eagle).
Kamarung	Kumandjan	*karmarug* (wedge-tailed eagle).
Warmut	Warmutjan	*warmut* (black-breasted buzzard).
		dulaku (black-nosed kangaroo).

The moieties are determined by patrilineal descent, but the subsections by matrilineal descent.

The regular system of marriage between the subsections, with the subsections of the offspring, is as follows:—

Yiritcha man.	Dua woman.	Yiritcha children. Male.	Yiritcha children. Female.
Ngarit	Bilindjan	Bangardi	Bangaritjan
	Kalian	Kaijark	Koitjan
Bulain	Kalian	Kaijark	Koitjan
	Bilindjan	Bangardi	Bangaritjan
Kaijark	Warmutjan	Ngarit	Ngaritjan
	Kumandjan	Bulain	Bulaindjan
Bangardi	Kumandjan	Bulain	Bulaindjan
	Warmutjan	Ngarit	Ngaritdjan

Dua man.	Yiritcha woman.	Dua children. Male.	Dua children. Female.
Buralang	Bulaindjan	Warmut	Warmutjan
	Ngaritjan	Karmarung	Kumandjan
Balang	Ngaritjan	Karmarung	Kumandjan
	Bulaindjan	Warmut	Warmutjan
Karmarung	Bangaritjan	Buralang	Kalian
	Koitjan	Balang	Bilindjan
Warmut	Koitjan	Balang	Bilindjan
	Bangaritjan	Buralang	Kalian

[a] Rolled *r* is indicated by *rr*.

13: Elkin E-4 (no date) 1933 O117 Murngin O117

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MARRIAGE AND DESCENT IN EAST ARNHEM LAND

By A. P. ELKIN

611 MR. THEODOR WEBB'S article on "Social Organization in East Arnhem Land"[1] supplies evidence for the existence of a 114 rule of descent which is very interesting and at the same time unusual in Australia. He states that "the moieties are determined by patrilineal descent, but the subsections by matrilineal descent." Perhaps it would be better to say that the descent of the moieties is patrilineal, while the descent of the subsections, which are divided between the moieties, four in each, is indirect patrilineal; but there is a proviso that in the case of alternate marriage, of which there is a regular scheme, the children belong to the subsection of the father's moiety to which they would have belonged had their *actual mother* been regularly married according to the strict subsection rule. Thus, the father is "thrown away" as far as the subsection is concerned.

617 Now, the subsection from which the alternate wife comes, 582 belongs to the same section as the subsection of the regular wife. 611 This may be put graphically as follows (the usual *Oceania* symbols are used):

$$A^1 = B^1$$
$$A^2 = B^2$$
$$C^1 = D^1$$
$$C^2 = D^2$$

A man of subsection A^1 normally marries a woman of subsection B^1, and his children belong to subsection D^2. But he may marry a woman of the other subsection of section B, that is B^2; if he does so, his children belong to D^1 and not to D^2. This is what follows if a woman of B^2 were married to a man of A^2, her regular spouse, and bore him children. If, on the other hand, a man of A^2 married a woman of B^1, his alternate wife, the children are no longer D^1, but D^2. Such is the scheme of descent for all the marriages, regular and

[1] *Oceania*, III, 406-411.

13: Elkin E-4 (no date) 1933 OI17 Murngin OI17

alternate, between the subsections. As far as the sections are concerned—ignoring the two subsections into which each section has been divided—the normal rules of marriage and descent are followed, namely, $\begin{pmatrix} A = B \\ C = D \end{pmatrix}$, and this was the conclusion of W. Lloyd Warner, who worked in the same region as Mr. Webb.[1]

But Mr. Webb's article reveals a most interesting feature of the subsection system in East Arnhem Land, namely, that the cycle of a man of any one subsection is not completed until by marriage and descent all eight subsections have been gone through, and until by descent alone all four subsections of his own moiety have been gone through. In the typical Australian subsection system, however, the cycle is completed by going through four of the subsections in marriage and descent, and two of the man's own moiety in descent only. To put it in another way, in the East Arnhem Land system as described by Mr. Webb, a man and his son's son do not belong to the one subsection, as is the case in the typical systems; the first descendant that belongs to the man's own subsection is his son's son's son's son. Or to use the usual symbols, in the typical system a man of A^1 marries a woman of B^1 and has children D^2; his son, D^2, marries a woman of C^2 and his children are back in A^1. But according to the table provided by Mr. Webb the cycle is: a man of A^1 marries a woman of B^1 and has a son D^2; the latter marries a woman of C^2 and has a son A^2 (not A^1 as in the usual systems); he then marries a woman of B^2 and has a son D^1, who marries a woman of C^1 and his children belong to A^1. According to this rule a man and his son's son cannot marry women of the same subsection, except in the case of an alternate marriage, for they belong to the two different subsections of one section. But in the case of an alternate marriage A^1 marries a woman of B^1, and his son D^2 marries a woman of C^1 instead of C^2, and so his children belong to A^1, the subsection of their father's father.

[1] "Morphology and Functions of the Australian Murngin Type of Kinship," *American Anthropologist*, n.s., 33, 2, 184.

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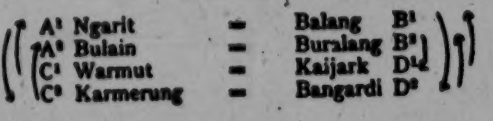
617 582 611 114

Using the East Arnhem Land subsection terms as well as the usual symbols, the system may be tabulated as follows:



The sign = connects intermarrying pairs of subsections, and the arrows the subsections of mother and child. It should further be remembered that the subsections Ngarit, Bulain, Kaijark and Bangardi together form the Yiritja patrilineal moiety, while the Balang, Buralang, Warmut and Karmerung belong to the Dua moiety. The above table depicts the regular scheme of marriage and descent according to Mr. Webb; an alternate marriage could result in shortening the cycle, as already explained.

In the descent of the subsections Webb differs from Warner, who gives the normal rule of marriage and descent in East Arnhem Land to be the typical Australian rule; that is, in the case of regular marriages a man and his son's son belong to the one subsection, while in alternate marriage descent depends on the mother alone. Indeed, Warner goes further and says that the descent of the subsections always depends on the mother, is matrilineal, and never bi-lineal. He further states that a man of either of the two subsections (say A^1 and A^2), which together make up one section (A), may marry into either of the subsections (B^1 and B^2), which together make up the other member of the intermarrying pair of sections (such as A and B).[3] Webb, however, says that the rule is for A^1 to marry B^1, though under certain circumstances he might marry B^2. Now this would appear to be the case, for as Warner points out,[4] the marriage rule is with mother's brother's daughter, and normally speaking the mother's brother's daughter of A^1 belongs to B^1, that is, to A^1's regular intermarrying subsection, according to Webb's table of marriage and descent. But according to Warner's formula,[5] which expresses the typical Australian subsection system, such as we find

[3] W. Lloyd Warner, *op. cit.*, 184-185.
[4] *Op. cit.*, 188.
[5] *Op. cit.*, 184.

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617 583 611 114

amongst the Northern Aranda and others, a man of East Arnhem Land could only marry his correct spouse. that is, his mother's brother's daughter, if he married into the alternate subsection (B^2), unless his mother's brother (C^2) had married his " alternate spouse " (D^1 instead of D^2). It should be remembered that one function performed by the normal and usual subsection system is to put cross-cousins into a different subsection from certain second-cousins (the children of mother's cross-cousins, *etc.*), and to put the latter, and not the former, into the subsection with which a person's own subsection regularly intermarries. Thus, in the usual Australian systems, the cross-cousins of A^1 are classed in subsection B^2, with which subsection A^1 does not intermarry. In other words, the subsection system is normally associated with the prohibition of cross-cousin marriage and with the rule of marriage with the daughter of parents' cross-cousin, own or tribal. But the whole point about the East Arnhem Land system is an association of subsections with a rule of marriage with the mother's brother's daughter. That obviously means that under a normal observance of the kinship marriage rule the rule of the descent of the subsections cannot be the same as in those tribes in which subsections are really part of the machinery for preventing cross-cousin marriage. Now, Mr. Webb's table of the marriage and descent of the subsections just shows how this association of subsections and matrilineal cross-cousin marriage can be worked. It is done normally by a cycle which, as we have seen, runs through the whole eight subsections, and not only four of them.

Mr. Webb's account of the descent of the subsections must, of course, be carefully checked, but there does not seem to be any reason for doubting its accuracy. It seems to be based on first-hand information from the natives whom he knows well, and apparently it has not been affected by any attempt to make it fit any theoretical formula of the working of subsection systems. Moreover, the fact that Mr. Webb does not even mention the kinship marriage rule probably strengthens the value of his evidence for the bare working of the subsection system in his region. In other words, Mr. Webb's account does not seem to have been in any way the result of theoretical considerations. Mr. Warner, on the other hand,

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seems to be passing over the larger cycle of the marriage and descent of the subsections, and merely treating the system as one of four sections; indeed, he almost ignores the subsections.[6] But the subsection system seems to be quite important in this area; it has totemic significance, it is used in daily conversation almost as much as the kinship terms, and it is of great value in ascertaining relationship and the associated modes of behaviour at inter-tribal gatherings. It is not therefore an unimportant subdivision of the four sections in East Arnhem Land any more than it is, say, in East Kimberley. Indeed, it is so important that it has been most carefully arranged to fit in with a rule of marriage with the mother's brother's daughter. Theoretically, this has been regarded as impossible, as, of course, it is, if the typical rule of the marriage and descent of the subsections be adhered to. The aborigines of this area were not so bound by theory, and faced with a practical problem, they seem to have solved it in a most ingenious manner by doubling the normal length of the cycle. The anthropologist finds in this another reason for not underestimating the intelligence of the Australian aborigine.

A. P. ELKIN

A NOTE UPON A SIMILAR SYSTEM AMONG THE NANGIOMERI

By W. E. H. STANNER

DURING the course of my field work in the Daly River–Fitzmaurice River district of North Australia in 1932 I spent two or three weeks among the Nangiomeri tribe whose true historic location is about 60 to 100 miles south-west of the white settlement on the Daly River, where the few remaining members of this tribe now live. The Nangiomeri possess a kinship system of a type closely related to that reported by Mr. Webb and upon which Dr. Elkin's interpretative article is based. I imagined at the time of my discovery and recording of the Nangiomeri system that it might be purely a localized phenomenon, but its occurrence in Arnhem Land, many hundreds of miles away, makes this variant full of important implications for the general theory of Australian kinship. This note is therefore appended to Dr. Elkin's article.

The Nangiomeri have been until recently a tribe without sections, subsections, moieties, or any named or unnamed divisions whatever. They probably once possessed a form of patrilineal totemism. Their kinship system was of general Kariera

[6] *Op. cit.* On a chart facing page 187, Warner simply uses the symbols $A^{1\,2}$, $B^{1\,2}$, $C^{1\,2}$, and $D^{1\,2}$, so that the subsection signs are valueless.

532 756 131 The drawings in polychrome from north-eastern Arnhem Land that accompany this paper[1] were made on sheets of stringy bark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*) by three medicinemen, called *marrngitmirri*, members of Mildjingi clan of the lower Glyde River, and of two neighbouring clans, Liagauwumirr' and Ngalladar 617 Tjambarpoingo. Mildjingi is a clan of *yiritja* moiety and Liagauwumirr' and Tjambarpoingo are members of the opposite moiety, *dua*, in which certain terminal vowels, notably *i* and *o* are elided as an arbitrary mark of distinction [N7] between clans of different moieties whose members speak similar languages. In Wanguri clan of the Arnhem Bay area the word *kulong* is applied to the medicineman.

776 In each case the figures drawn by the medicineman represent the spirits called *marrngit*, two or more in 787 number, which adopt certain men, often first subjecting 756 them to an ordeal or series of ordeals, after which they are known as *marrngitmirri*—medicinemen—and are vested with the special powers of this cult.

The *marrngit* or spirit familiars of two of the three medicinemen from eastern Arnhem Land who claimed to be *marrngitmirri* are shown in Plates I and J*a*. These *marrngit* were said first to have visited the men whom they later adopted, subjecting them to a series of ordeals. Sometimes they brought sickness, in other cases, according to my informants, they inflicted injuries, sometimes actually breaking bones and almost killing the novice, after which they restored him and then invited the initiate in turn to try his own skill by injuring the *marrngit* and restoring him. After a more or less lengthy period of trial by way of initiation, the *marrngit* finally adopted the *marrngitmirri* and thenceforth helped and guided him in the practice of the cult.

756 According to most of my informants, the cult of the *marrngitmirri* or medicineman in eastern Arnhem Land is restricted to men only, although it is not a sacred cult and is not secret—that is, it does not depend upon ritual or supernatural backing, and is carried out in open camp without any secrecy, in the presence of women and children. Many of the *marrngit*, the spirit familiars them- [776] selves, were said by my informants to be females. Although women do not appear to become *marrngitmirri* they do [791 practise as rainmakers. Some of the rainmakers of east 562] Arnhem Land, of whom there were three in Mildjingi clan—the clan of Wilindjango—were women, one of whom was renowned for her prowess with the rites and magical spells of the rainmaker. However, although rain- [788] making depends upon the understanding and correct observance of certain rituals and the use of the appropriate

* *With Plates I and J*

[p. 97 (B)]

magical rites and spells, it does not involve the co-operation of spirit familiars.

The majority of informants stated that the cult of the *marrngit* is not a hereditary one, and they asserted that although the son of a *marrngitmirri* father may also be *marrngitmirri*, membership of the cult does not necessarily pass from father to son. But at least one informant of Wanguri clan, a clan of Mindjikai *barpuro*, declared that in his own clan, of which the principal territory is at Arnhem Bay, a little to the south and east of Elcho Island, the cult of the *marrngit* was hereditary and did pass from father to son. On controversial issues of this kind, long discussions often took place among the old men who acted as informants, and finally they would reach agreement and give me their verdict. Far from being careless or merely anxious to please, they took great pains to check information by referring to people who possessed specialized knowledge, and took much trouble in settling any doubtful point. My informants declared that the *marrngit* was also hereditary in the Burara tribe, where, however, the cult of the *ragalk* was also established and was certainly dominant. Some conflict, or difference of opinion, does occur in matters of this kind particularly in north-eastern Arnhem Land where there is no hard and fast, or orthodox, view, supported by a large body of opinion.

This means that, as might be expected, in the absence of a written language or an organized body to formalize belief, there is necessarily some degree of flexibility, some scope for individual ideas, and within the atypical, intensely segmentary, social organization of eastern Arnhem Land, this variability tends to be emphasized. Even in matters of kinship, which concerns the entire group, since it regulates all behaviour, differences sometimes occurred and the people would call in old men and submit an intricate or knotty problem to them in the way that I have mentioned above.

It was intended originally to confine this paper to a short account of the *marrngitmirri*, translated from the statements of the medicinemen themselves, and to follow this with descriptions of the *marrngit*, which are shown in the accompanying plates of actual drawings of their spirit familiars made by these medicinemen. But my attention has been drawn to an article by the late Revd. T. T. Webb published some years ago, 'The Making of a Marrngit,'[2] which contains some errors and misconceptions, and I have therefore extended the scope of this article to discuss the relationship of the medicineman and sorcerer in Arnhem Land and the roles and the distribution of these cults.

In the opening paragraph of this article Mr. Webb says: 'In east Arnhem Land there are two classes of magicians

[p.97(c)]

speak and to hear most of what was said except when it was idiomatic or spoken very quickly, I made the following note: 'The cult of the *kalka* or *ragalk* properly belongs to the area of Arnhem Land extending from the Burara of Cape Stewart westwards. It did not exist as a cult to the east of this territory, although greatly feared by these people, but it was an important influence to the west as well as among the interior tribes, the Raimbar'ngo, the Ritar'ngo and others from the Derby Creek, lying south and west of Cape Stewart and the Liverpool River.'

And to this record, the following significant note was added: 'It was unknown to the Tjambarpoingo, the Kalbanuk and to most of the Mandjikai—the "sandfly people"—with the exception of the Wallamango, the latter a people of the Crocodile Islands who claim affinity with Mandjikai *barpuro*.' Wanguri clan is also linked with the same group. *Barpuro*) is a term that is difficult to define in the intricate and aberrant social grouping of this area. It is applied in eastern Arnhem Land to loosely integrated clans often occupying discontinuous tracts of territory, geographically sometimes widely separated, but nevertheless having in common at least some vital and significant part of their total totemic heritage.

The immense complexity of this social grouping caused many lengthy digressions among informants and frequently interrupted the collection of long texts in the language to enable difficult points as to the bonds between groups to be clarified and the resultant effects upon the attitudes of people made clear to me. Because the cult of the *ragalk* or sorcerer was known to the Yanango of Mooroonga Island in the Crocodile Group—a clan of Maringo *malla*—who were on the borderline between the east and the west, with many cultural differences as well as differences in social organization, the impact of the *kalka* upon them was not as sudden or as destructive as it was upon the people of Elcho Island. My informants stressed the fact that the Ritar'ngo of the interior, who occupied a big area of country lying between the Liverpool River to the north and the Wilton (a tributary of the upper Roper) in the south, knew and practised the cult of the *kalka*, as did their neighbours the Raimbar'ngo.

It will be clear from the foregoing that the two cults, the cults of the *marrngit* and the *kalka*, are not generally complementary and do not, as Mr. Webb's account implies, occur together among the same people, with the possible exception of the Yanango and Wallamango and the neighbouring Burara. But the Yanango and Wallamango are marginal groups and this has an important influence upon their attitudes towards certain culture traits, and the emphasis placed upon differences tends to exaggerate these.

The more or less benevolent *marrngitmirri*, the typical medicineman, a kind of general practitioner, with his spirit familiars, is characteristic of the region east of the Crocodile Islands, extending to Cape Arnhem, where the cult of the *ragalk* does not exist.

I have stated that prior to the transfer of the Mission from Elcho Island west to the Crocodile Group, the people of the Tjambarpoingo (*dua* moiety) and Kopapoingo-

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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601 602 respect to each other. The 'father-son' behaviour is one type; the 'mother's brother-sister's son', another type; the 'wife's mother's brother-sister's daughter's husband' a very different type; and so on.

582 This system, however, is not peculiar to north-east Arnhem Land. Nor indeed is the marriage rule. This allows marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter, but forbids it with one's father's sister's daughter. To emphasize the latter [609] prohibition, a man calls his father's sister by the term for father. This reminds him that her daughter is like a sister to him, and therefore cannot (and will not) be thought of as a possible wife. In other words, only one sort of first-cousin marriage is allowed; it is the cross-cousin on his mother's side for a male, and on her father's side for a female. This is the preferred marriage, but, of course, such a spouse cannot always be obtained. Then, a man marries the child of the cross-cousin of one of his parents, or a person classified with her—a second cousin. This marriage rule and prohibition also operate amongst the natives near Lagrange in western Australia.

• 617 Now, however, we do come to something distinctive. Comparatively recently in the history of the region, a form of social organization has spread there from the south-west which is known as the subsection system. According to this, a person's relations, that is all the people in the community, are not only divided into about twenty kinship classes (like [601] the mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, nephew, uncle, wife's mother, mother's father, and other classes), but in addition these classes of relations are divided into eight named groups, each of which includes two or three types of relations. Thus, if I am in one subsection, my children are in another, my wife in a third, her mother in a fourth, my mother in a fifth, second cousins whom I cannot marry in a sixth, and so on. In most tribes, too, my son's son and my father's father are in my own subsection, while my son and

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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my father both belong to another subsection; further, my mother's brother's children and my father's sister's children belong to one group, whereas the children of the cross-cousins of my parents are divided amongst two other groups. In these tribes, too, the rules prohibit marriage with one's own cross-cousins (mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter), but allow marriage with the daughters of certain of the cross-cousins of one's parents. Therefore, the subsection or group which includes these possible spouses is the wife subsection, whereas the other one, the cross-cousin subsection, must be regarded differently.

It used to be said that the main function of this eight-subsection system was to separate one's first (cross) cousins whom one must not marry from those second cousins whom one could marry, and that the system would not make sense in a tribe which allowed marriage with mother's brother's daughter. However, the Aborigines are the best judges of that. The subsection system came to them at intertribal meetings; they considered it to be of practical value, and being also interested in its totemic and ceremonial aspects, they adopted it. In doing so they modified its principle of descent in the male line, so as to fit in with marriage with mother's brother's daughter. The result, briefly put, is that instead of a man and his son's son belonging to the same subsection, a series of four subsections is gone through before a man and his direct descendant belong to the one group—that is, a man is grouped with his son's son's son's son.

The actual subsection terms used in the region are:

The sign = connects intermarrying pairs of subsections,

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617 persons who in many cases are cross-cousins (mother's brother's children or father's sister's children) to one another; and the arrows connect the subsections of mother and child.

By following the table it will be seen that a Ngarit man marries a Balang woman and his son belongs to Bangardi. Likewise, Bangardi marries a Karmerung woman and has a Bulain son. So too, a Bulain man's son is Kaijark, and a Kaijark man's son is back to Ngarit. In the same way, Balang man's son is Karmerung, whose son is Buralang, whose son is Warmut, whose son is back into the Balang subsection.

616 These two male lines (or cycles) of descent are interesting for another reason. Before the north-east Arnhem Land natives adopted the subsection system, they possessed what Mr Chaseling refers to as two moieties, Dua and Yiritcha, the dual organization. This division, which is social and ceremonial in function, runs through the whole community, dividing it into two groups, membership of which is de-
[617] termined by descent in the male line. Moreover, Dua peoples must marry Yiritcha peoples and vice versa. This means that a man and his children, his son's children, and those of his son's son and son's son's son, all belong to the same moiety, whereas the wives and husbands of these persons all belong to the other moiety.

616 Then came the eight subsection system, which the natives
617 adjusted to their kinship grouping and marriage rules, and,
179 with as great facility, to their moiety organization. One series or cycle of four subsections, each related to the preceding one as child to father (that is, patrilineally), was equated to one moiety, and the other series to the other. Thus, the Yiritcha moiety consists of the Ngarit-Bangardi-Bulain-Kaijark-Ngarit cycle, and the Dua moiety of the Balang-Karmerung-Buralang-Warmut-Balang cycle. The result is that when a Ngarit man, who incidentally must be

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a member of the Yiritcha moiety, marries his mother's brother's daughter, he is marrying a woman of the Balang subsection and Dua moiety, and also of a local clan different from his own, as will be shown later.

This is possibly somewhat confusing to the reader, and to all who do not possess an understanding of aboriginal social organization. But I can vouch for the fact that the system is intelligible and quite logical, and those who tend to regard the Aborigines as a low type, or of poor intelligence, must reconcile that opinion with the fact that the north-east Arnhem Land Aborigines not only understand the system, and make it work in everyday life, but that they adjusted this new grouping to their own kinship and marriage rules and to their dual organization.

I have enlarged on this matter, not only to give some idea of the background of behaviour in the region, but also to suggest that in matters of importance to themselves, the Aborigines are just as intelligent and logical as we are. It is our ignorance of their world of thought which often causes us to regard them as low in the scale of intelligence, when, as a matter of fact, we are not acting very intelligently in judging them without a thorough knowledge of the facts.

The Aborigines and their Country

Here and there Mr Chaseling mentions hordes and sacred wells. This introduces us to the fundamental unit of the social and even 'political' organization. The tribe as an organization of clans or hordes does not really exist in this region. Instead there are a number of local groups, each occupying on the average about 360 square miles of country, loosely bound together by the fact that they possess in common certain features of social organization, for example, the kinship system, marriage rule, eight-subsection system, and the dual organization (or division of the community into two groups for certain ceremonial and social purposes);

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CHAPTER NINE

Hordes at Home and at War

616 1973 An aboriginal myth says that tribal and social laws were made by spirit-Ancestors. Spirit-Ancestors wandered through the country begetting the first aboriginal children and instructing them in secret ceremonies, sacred songs, and dances. These first-born nomads were divided by the Ancestors into two great Dua and Yiritja moieties, and today a Dua man can marry only a Yiritja woman, or vice versa, and all children belong to the father's moiety.

616 621 This rule applies through the family to the numerous small hordes, for the horde is an enlarged patriarchal family in which the men and their children are members of one of the moieties, and wives and mothers belong to the other. Unmarried adult daughters and sisters are unknown in any horde, for they are bestowed in childhood to become wives in hordes of the opposite moiety. [589]

617 582 Each moiety includes four marriage-groups or subsections; the total of eight forms the framework of a marriage and social system. To obtain a wife, a man theoretically considers whether he is Dua or Yiritja; a Dua man invariably marries a Yiritja woman. The problem is further complicated in that he, being Dua, belongs to one of the four Dua marriage-sections and therefore not only marries a Yiritja woman, but a woman who must be from one of its four marriage-subsections, although marriage into a specified second section is allowed. Children of this union take the father's Dua moiety, though they will not belong to his marriage-subsection, nor yet to the mother's, but to another indirectly determined by the mother's.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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It sounded very complicated to me, but I found that all aborigines could name their relationships just as easily as I could recall, say, my first-cousin relationship. In its simplest form the organization provides that a man marries his mother's brother's daughter. Similar systems have operated throughout Australia and are by no means unknown elsewhere. In an ancient biblical folklore story, the aged Abraham sent for his eldest servant, and said: 'Put your hand under my thigh and swear that you will not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But go to my country and take a wife unto my son Isaac.' In later years Isaac in turn said to his son Jacob: 'Arise, go to Padanaram to the house' (horde-family) 'of Bethuel your mother's father and take a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.'

Neither a man's sons nor his sons' sons procure wives from the same marriage-subsection as he; for though the sons are of the same moiety as the father, Dua or Yiritja, and from the same horde family, they definitely belong to another marriage-subsection. A man's sons' sons' sons' son, however, known to us as his great-great-grandson, is identical with him in marriage-subsection and recommences the marriage-cycle by seeking a wife from the same marriage-subsection as did his great-great-grandfather. Perhaps it should be mentioned that a man must not marry his father's sister's daughter, but he may marry his mothers' brother's daughter. Cross-cousin marriage is prevented.

Amazing as it may seem, a nomad knows with certainty the moiety, horde, and marriage-subsection from which even an unborn infant will seek a wife, and where in turn his hypothetical offspring will find wives. He finds it a very simple thing to trace any family-tree indefinitely, for all the members of scattered hordes in a tribal group are related, and a man can name his relationship to any other nomad, even one whom he has never seen, who may live hundreds of

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Two Women and a Serpent

LONG after the creative Ancestresses disappeared into the west, two other vague heroines came from that direction. It is not known where they came from, except that their birthplace was in the darkness beyond the setting sun. They came to discover the land from which the sun rose and to explore this world of light. 773*

By the time they reached Arnhem Land their journey had developed into a triumphal march from one sacred site to another. They finished the work of the Junkgowa by distributing arts and crafts and animals. They also made a new palm-leaf dilly-bag and manufactured the first stone axe-heads, as well as providing two or three quarries from which they are now chipped. Bush food was scarce before their time, and they distributed edible animals and made the popular 'sugar-bag' or native bees' nests. These minute stingless bees build small nests in hollow trees. Nomads cut an opening and scoop out a pint of wax and watery syrup mixed with chips and scores of bees. They eat the lot. Families camp in the hills for a week or more, and live on 'sugar-bag', with land-snails, goannas, and small animals to give some variety to this diet. 262 [136] [222]

The Women came one day to a high circular hill covered by dense vegetation and inhabited by every known bird, reptile, yam, and fruit. It was an ideal camping-place and they stayed there for a long time eating their first raw meat and naming and distributing the animals and birds to the eight marriage-subsections or 'malk'. It will be recalled that every child is born into one of these eight malk and can 773* [617]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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marry only into another specified malk. Animals and birds assigned by the Women to the malk were accepted as the insignia or 'djungoin' of those marriage-groups.

The earthly paradise on the round hill kept the Women occupied in naming and distributing fauna, and in inaugurating the famous Gunabibee ceremony in which the story of their work and adventures is preserved. In decorating themselves and their totems for the ceremony, they began the present-day practice of drawing their own blood and smearing it over their bodies as an adhesive for the birds'-down so often applied now in strikingly effective designs. Blood is taken by a process suggestive of barbarism and scientific knowledge of blood circulation. In west Arnhem Land string is tied above the elbow of the donor, who closes his hand and alternately bends and straightens his arm till the veins show up. One of these is nicked with a shell or spear-head, and by bending and relaxing the arm the blood is pumped into a bark container. To seal the wound the tourniquet is removed, and a boll from the cotton tree is dabbed over the opening. Half a pint of blood may be removed, and the donor and his friends unconcernedly paint it over their bodies with fibre or human-hair brushes. Before it congeals they apply birds' feathers.

In time the younger of the two Sisters realized that, for reasons unspecified, she was about to give birth to a child. Consequently they searched for a good camp site and found one near a lagoon. After the fashion of women, they had fossicked during the day for food, and had also gathered sheets of paper-bark to cover their hut, so that by the time they came to the lagoon they were loaded down with rolls of bark, and their dilly-bags bulged with yams, goannas, and animals.

The older Woman built the hut and bent sticks into a dome, resembling the ribs of an umbrella, and covered these with bark. Meanwhile, her sister went to the lagoon for